

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: December 3, 2003

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS
(DOE/EIS-0285/SA-189- Bell-Boundary No.3 83/4 to 83/6 and Colville-Boundary No.1 17/4 to 17/6)

TO: Tom Murphy – TFS/Bell-1
Natural Resource Specialist

Proposed Action: Vegetation Management along the Bell-Boundary No.3 83/4 to 83/6 and Colville-Boundary No.1 17/4 to 17/6 Transmission Line Right-of-Way (ROW). The line is a 115 kV single circuit transmission line having an easement width of 100 feet. The proposed work will be accomplished in the indicated sections of the transmission line corridor as identified in Attachment 1, Checklist.

Location: The transmission line ROW and structures are situated in Stevens County, Washington.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

Description of the Proposal: BPA proposes to clear unwanted vegetation around selected transmission line structures that may impede the operation and maintenance of the subject transmission line. All work will be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards. BPA plans to conduct vegetation control with the goal of removing tall growing vegetation that is currently or will soon be a hazard to the transmission line. Unfortunately, BPA's overall goal to have low-growing plant communities along the rights-of-way to control the development of potentially threatening vegetation is not an appropriate strategy for this line segment since it is in a rural residential area.

Analysis: This project meets the standards and guidelines for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

Planning Steps:

1. Identify facility and the vegetation management need.

The work involved will be to clear tall growing vegetation that is currently or will soon pose a hazard to the lines and selectively eliminating tall growing vegetation before it reaches a height or density to begin competing with low-growing vegetation. All work will take place in existing rights-of-ways.

Also, all off right-of-way trees that are potentially unstable and will fall within a minimum distance or into the zone where the conductors swing will be removed. All work will be accomplished by manual or mechanical control methods to assure that there is little potential harm to non-target vegetation and to low-growing plants. Desirable low-growing plants will not be disturbed. The work will provide system reliability and fire protection.

The vegetation control will be ongoing every 1-2 year as tall growing vegetation and target trees are identified.

2. Identify surrounding land use and landowners/managers and any mitigation.

The work site is located in rural residential and forested setting. The types and density of trees to be removed are noted on attachment 1, checklist. All affected land is privately owned and developed. No other agencies or tribal involvement exists.

The landowner will be contacted if trees pose a hazard to the line. This contact will be by onsite visit. BPA will remove the trees at no expense to the landowner.

3. Identify natural resources and any mitigation.

T&E Species and Habitats

No known locations of T&E animal or fish species or their habitats have been identified in the project area. Information concerning T&E species and habitats was verified using several databases (i.e. Tview2 and Northwest Subbasin Geographic Data Browser).

Plant Species

No plant T&E species are present or have been observed.

Surface Water Resources

Wetland resources within a ½ mile vicinity of the corridor have been identified through Tview2 but no planned work activities will impact these mapped wetland areas. Any work performed at structures within wetlands will follow the following mitigation measures:

- No vehicle equipment will enter wetlands.
- All work will be performed using handheld equipment.
- All fueling operations will be performed outside the wetland area.

A small creek, identified as Kenny Creek, is located between transmission line structures 83/4 and 83/5. The following buffers and mitigation measures will be observed to avoid disturbing any potential fish habitat:

- Low-growing vegetation that provides shade will be protected. A 35-foot buffer will be observed to protect the creek's canopy.
- No herbicides will be applied near this potential fish-bearing waterway. Only cutting and topping will be performed as necessary.
- Cut trees will not be felled into the creek unless directed to do so by the State or Federal Fish & Wildlife.
- Vehicles will be kept away from water channels to minimize erosion and sedimentation of waters.
- Standard erosion control practices will be employed, if necessary, to prevent sedimentation of the water.

Sensitive Areas

No visually sensitive areas have been identified.

Cultural Resources

No cultural resources have been identified. If archaeological material is discovered during the course of vegetation management activities, all work will be halted and a professional archaeologist will be notified.

Erosion Control

Erosion potential will be minimal due to the low number of trees to be cut and the method of cutting (handheld chainsaws).

Issues concerning wildlife, fish, plants and cultural resources have been addressed and work within the project corridor is expected to have “no effect” on any natural or cultural resources present. If any T&E animal activity is observed, project activity will be suspended until a revised assessment is performed.

Prior to the beginning of the work, the contractor will be provided with a set of the project maps, supplemental information as well as with a list of management prescriptions from the Vegetation Management EIS.

4. Determine vegetation control and debris disposal methods.

Vegetation control on all lands will be performed using manual and mechanical methods. No herbicides will be used due to the landowner’s planned subsequent use of the right-of-way.

Debris will be disposed by:

Lop and Scatter – Branches of a fallen tree are cut off (lopped) by axe or chainsaw, so the tree trunk lies flat on the ground. The trunks are occasionally cut in 1 to 2 m (4 to 8 ft) lengths.

The cut branches and trunks are then scattered on the ground, laid flat and left to decompose.

The landowner will utilize the tree boles.

5. Determine revegetation methods, if necessary.

Due to minimal soil disturbance, no seeding is planned.

6. Determine monitoring needs.

The right-of-way and structures identified in the checklist will be inspected after completion of the work to determine if all hazard trees have been removed from these areas.

7. Prepare appropriate environmental documentation.

Besides this supplement analysis, no other environmental documentation should be necessary.

Findings: This Supplement Analysis finds that 1) the proposed actions are substantially consistent with the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285) and ROD, and; 2) there are no new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed actions or their impacts. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

/s/ Michael A. Rosales
Michael A. Rosales
Environmental Physical Scientist

CONCUR /s/ Thomas C. McKinney
Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: 12/8/2003

Attachment

cc:

L. Croff- -KEC-4
T. McKinney – KEC-4
J. Meyer – KEP-4
J. Sharpe – KEPR-4
M. Rosales – KEPR/Bell-1
P. Key – LC-7
J. Hilliard Creecy – T-DITT2
K. Rodd – TF/DOB-1
D. Labrosse – TFS/Bell-1
J. Lahti – TFS/Bell-1
M. Borrows – TFSK/Ellensburg
Environmental File – KEC-4
Official File – KEP-4 (EQ-14)

1. IDENTIFY FACILITY AND THE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT NEED

1.1 Describe Right-of-way.

Corridor Name	Corridor Length & kV	Easement width	Miles of Treatment
Bell-Boundary No. 3	83/4 – 83/6 115Kv	100 ft	< 0.25 miles
Colville – Boundary No. 1	17/4 – 17/6		

Right Of Way: 12 trees off of the right of way

1.2 Describe the vegetation needing management.

Vegetation Types: White Fir, Grand Fir, and Red Fir

1.3 List measures you will take to help promote low-growing plant communities. If promoting low-growing plants is not appropriate for this project, explain why.

Sites are in forested areas. LGPC is not an option.

1.4 Describe overall management scheme/schedule.

Initial entry - Targeted trees that are leaning towards the conductors, and approaching clearance zone.

Subsequent entry's - This maintenance activity is ongoing.

Future cycles – This maintenance is ongoing as targets are identified.

2. LAND USE AND LANDOWNERS/MANAGERS

2.1 List the types of landowners and land uses along your corridor.

Private property landowner

Landowners/Managers/Uses: Rural: forested area

2.2 Describe method for notifying right-of-way landowners and requesting information (i.e., door hanger, letter, phone call, e-mail, and/or meeting). Develop landowner mail list, if appropriate.

Project site visit with landowner.

2.3 List the specific land owner/land use measures determined from the handbook or through your consultations with the entities that will be applied.

BPA will remove the tree at no expense to the landowner. Tree debris will be lopped and scattered by BPA.

2.4 Review any existing landowner agreements (e.g. tree/brush Permits or Agreements). List in table above any provisions that need to be followed and where they are located.

N/A

2.5 List any known casual informal use of the right-of-way by non-owner publics. List any constraints or measure's to take due to the informal use.

Site is rural forested area. No herbicide will be used on this project.

- 2.6 List other potentially affected people, agencies, or tribes (that are not landowners/managers) that need to be notified or coordinated with. Describe method of notification and coordination.**

N/A

3. IDENTIFY NATURAL RESOURCES

- 3.1 List any water resources (streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands) that may be impacted by vegetation control activities. For each water body describe the control methods and requirements or mitigation measures that will be used.**

Project site is upland, dry, conifer woodland.

- 3.2 If planning to use herbicides, list locations of any known irrigation source, wells, or springs (landowners maybe able to provide this info if requested).**

N/A

- 3.3 List below the areas that have Threatened or Endangered Plant or Animal Species and the name of the species, and any special measures that need to be taken due to their presence. Attach any BAs, T&E maps, or letters from US Fish and Wildlife.**

N/A

- 3.4 List any other measures to be taken for enhancing wildlife habitat or protecting species.**

N/A

- 3.5 List any visually sensitive areas and the measures to be taken at these areas.**

N/A

- 3.6 List areas with cultural resources and the measures to be taken in those areas.**

N/A

- 3.7 List areas with steep slopes or potential erosion areas and the measure and methods to be applied in those areas.**

N/A

- 3.8 List areas of spanned canyons and the type of cutting needed.**

N/A

4. DETERMINE VEGETATION CONTROL METHODS

- 4.1 List Methods that will be used in areas not previously addressed in steps above.**

Manual, hand-held chainsaw

5. DETERMINE DEBRIS DISPOSAL AND REVEGETATION

5.1 Describe the debris disposal methods to be used and any special considerations.

Debris Disposal: lop and scatter. Tree boles will be utilized by landowner.

5.2 List areas of reseeded or replanted (those areas not already described in steps 1, 2, or 3).

N/A

5.3 If not using native seed/plants, describe why.

N/A

5.4 Describe timing and any follow-up that will need to take place to ensure germination/success of seeding/planting.

N/A

6. DETERMINE MONITORING NEEDS

6.1 Describe the follow-up/monitoring cycle that will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the vegetation control methods used.

Right of way is reviewed 1-2 times per year to identify other potential targets.

6.2 Describe any follow-up or monitoring needed to determine if mitigation measures were effective.

Right of way is reviewed 1-2 times per year.

7. PREPARE APPROPRIATE ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

7.1 Describe any potential project impacts or project work that are different than those disclosed in the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program EIS. Describe how those differences impact natural resources and if the differences are “substantial”.

None

7.2 Is there a need for additional NEPA documentation (i.e. Forest Service requirement, Record of Decision, supplemental EIS)? If so, attach.

No